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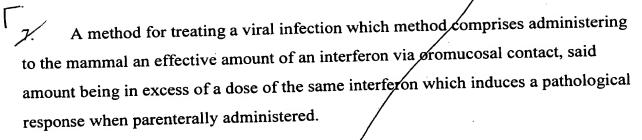
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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- A method for stimulating host defense mechanisms in a mammal which method comprises administering to the mammal a stimulating amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being greater than about 20 x 10⁶ IU of interferon for a 70 kg human.
 - 2. A method for stimulating an immune response in a mammal which method comprises administering to the mammal an immunostimulating amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being greater than about 20 x 10⁶ IU of interferon for a 70 kg human.
 - 3. A method of claim 1 in which the effective dose of interferon is administered in a single dose.
- 15 4. A method of claim 1 in which the effective dose of interferon is administered in a plurality of smaller doses over a period of time sufficient to elicit immunostimulation equivalent to that of a single dose.
- 5. A method of claim 1 in which an immunostimulating dose of interferon is administered continuously over a period of time sufficient to elicit immunostimulation equivalent to that of a single dose.
 - 6. A method for treating a neoplastic condition which method comprises administering to the mammal an effective amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being in excess of a dose of the same interferon which induces a pathological response when parenterally administered.

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- 8. A method of claim 1 wherein the interferon comprises a Type I interferon.
- 9. A method of claim 8 wherein the interferon is selected from the group consisting of IFN-α, IFN-β, IFN-ω consensus IFN, and mixtures thereof.
- 10. A method of claim 9 wherein the IFN-α comprises recombinant IFN-α.
- 11. A method of claim 1 wherein the interferon comprises a Type II interferon.
- 15 12. A method of claim 11 wherein the Type II interferon comprises γ-IFN.

13. A method of claim b wherein the neoplastic condition is of non-viral etiology.

- 14. A method of claim 1 in which the dose of interferon is from about 20 x 10⁶ IU to about 1000 x 10⁶ IU of interferon.
 - 15. A method of claim 1 in which the dose of interferon is from about 20×10^6 IU to about 500×10^6 IU of interferon.
- 25 16. A method of claim 1 in which the dose of interferon is from about 50 x 106 IU to about 500 x 106 IU of interferon.

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- 17. Interferon composition for oromucosal contact to stimulate host defense mechanisms or an immune response in a mammal which composition comprises a stimulating amount of the interferon, said amount exceeding that which would elicit a pathological response when parenterally administered.
- 18. A pharmaceutical composition in unit dosage form adapted for oromucosal administration comprising from about 20 x 109 IV to about 1000 x 106 IU of interferon and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
- 10 19. A composition of claim 18 comprising from about 20 x 106 IU to about 500 x 106 IU of interferon.
 - 20. A composition of claim 18 comprising from about 50 x 10⁶ IU to about 500 x 10⁶ IU of interferon.

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